

[Seamen's Stories]

AUG 8 1939 Dup.

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

FORM A Circumstances of Interview

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Marion Charles Hatch

ADDRESS 862 First Avenue

DATE July 24, 1939

SUBJECT Seaman's Stories

1. Date and time of interview Week of July 24, 1939
2. Place of interview National Maritime Union of America, 26 South Street and South Street bars.
3. Name and address of informant Seamen who contributed these stories are: E.King, G.E.Moore, Charle Saunders, E.A. Crocker, C.B.Cameron.
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant. No one.

Library of Congress

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

No one.

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

FOLKLORE

NEW YORK

FORM C Text of Interview (Unedited)

STATE New York

NAME OF WORKER Marion Charles Hatch

ADDRESS 862 First Avenue

DATE July 24, 1939

SUBJECT Seamen's Stories Shorts and Expressions

"I got sinus trouble from working around the food and steam."

"That's a good sinus its bad for you!"

"I got the chuck horrors." (hungry)

"Don't drink water; you got your belly all rusted!"

"Pie-card" — anybody holding an office in the union.

"Blow your top" to talk, blow off steam'.

Library of Congress

"Blow your hole" " " " " "

"That's the best thing that happened since Christ was an ordinary seaman."

2

"He's got an idea! Treat it good! Its an orphan a long ways from home."

"They fine members for walking through a picket line!.

"We don't do that. We scalp them like the Indians!"

"This man is so lazy."

"I seen a quarter lying down and told the other guy pick it up for me."

"Give me a cigarette! What are you going to do, pin them on your shirt."

Near the equator they tell the new men, "Look out! We're going to bump into the line!" The skipper puts the binoculars to his eyes. They put up a hair with a cootie. That's an elephant crossing the line.

***** RHYMES The mind blew, and the ship flew, we won't be home for a month or two.

(While passing ships, docking a ship) Green to green, Red to red, Perfect safety, Go ahead. 3 If by chance you are in doubt, Port your helm and come about.

" FINK "

By E. King I'm just a fink, And I know I stink, I know I'm never right; So when I see a picket, I buy a ticket 'Cause I never stop to fight.

" DOWN SOUTH "

Library of Congress

By E. King Away down south In the land of cotton, Where sailors get throwed In the jug for nothin
Stay away, Stay away, Stay away sailorman.

“ THE CAPTAIN SAID ”

Reported by E. King The captain said, “God strike me dead,” And the mate he said, “God blimee!
And the man at the wheel said, “I'd like to have a feel Of the girl I left behind me!”

4

“ G-Man ”

By E. King I'm a G-man from South Street, I never done no harm, But when you think
of chasing robbers Don't send me the alarm. For I'm a South Street G-man only, When
around I make things hum To define a South Street G-man To you I'm just a bum.

“ CHASTE ”

By E. King

Three sailors got shipwrecked on a deserted island. They had a girl. So one day there was
another ship came along to rescue them and on this rescue ship there was a minister. So
when the minister was talking to the sailors he asked one of the sailors where the girl was.
The sailor told him she had died. They buried her. So the minister asked him if she was a
good girl and was she chaste. He said, “you're damned right. All over the island.”

“ CROSSED-UP ”

By E. Moore

This chief mate was very hard at hearing and he always relied on one of the sailors to
relay the orders to him, that came from the captain. One day the sailor got mad with the
5 mate and decided that he would cross him up a little. They were coming alongside the

Library of Congress

dock at the time and the captain shouted down to the mate, "Get that headline out!" So the mate turned to this sailor and said, "What did the captain say?" So the sailor replied, "Drop the port anchor." Which the mate did. So the captain then hollered down, "What are you trying to do?" Thereupon the mate asked the sailor, "What did he say?" The sailor says, "Drop the starboard anchor?"

" SPOILED BABY "

By Charlie Saunders

I heard Judy tell this. It seemed this woman was riding on a street car with a baby and the baby kept crying. So this old gentleman, sitting next to her, asked her, "Isn't that baby spoiled?" She says, "Oh, no! They all smell like that!"

" RIDDLE "

By E. A. Crocker

Riddle. What is it? Forward on the port side. Aft on the starboard side. Inside on one side. Outside on both sides and there isn't a ship that floats in the Atlantic Ocean that hasn't got it. Answer, water.

6

" RIGHT YOU ARE "

By Charlie Saunders

This sailor was sitting in a crowded street car and this elderly lady got aboard. So nobody would get up and give her a seat; except this sailor. So the old lady said to him, "You're the only gentleman in the street car." He replied, "You're goddam right lady, you tell 'em!"

" NEW STAR "

Library of Congress

By C.B. Cameron

The mate told the ordinary seaman to steer for the star. The mate was busy in the chart room and came back a few minutes later. The ordinary seaman says to the mate, "You'll have to give me another star. I lost that one." He was headed in opposite direction. Once they gave him an electric light to steer by and it went out.

" SMOKED UP "

By G.E. Moore

On the Guayaquil we lost the wheel about 150 miles out of Balboa. The chief engineer says, "We'll smoke her up, so the tow boat can locate us." After the towboat picked them up, towed them through the Canal to Cristobel, they couldn't stop her from smoking. She laid in drydock for 26 days. To make her smoke you shut down on your draft and the tubes get all plugged up with soot, carbon. As a matter of fact she smoked until the carbon was cleaned. It's the same as they do on destroyers.

7

" OBEYED ORDERS "

By E.A. Crocker

I told a follow to put the log out. The next day I went to look for the log, to put the log over again, myself. I asked him what he did with it. He said, "I throw it overboard just like you told me!" The log is a machine worth \$33. It registers the mileage. There's a long cotton rope, 300 ft. long, on the end of the rope is a propeller, that keeps twisting. It measures the speed of the boat.

" BOOST MRS. ROOSEVELT "

Library of Congress

By Charlie Saunders

The Daughters of the American Revolution are always talking so much about patriotism, but when they travel they will ride in any ship that doesn't carry the Stars and Stripes. They'll ride the Ile de France, the Rex, the Queen Mary. The same with the movie stars. They ride in foreign ships instead of the American ships. The Leviathan laid over in Brooklyn until she was a rusty hulk, because she couldn't get any passengers. Finally sold for scrap iron. Mrs. Roosevelt told the D.A.R.! Now there's a woman, Mrs. Roosevelt. It's too bad she wasn't twins. Too bad her father wasn't named Dionne.

8

“ LAUNDRY ”

By G.E. Moore

Before we had a union the chief engineers and firsts had a habit of getting the wipers to wash their clothes, once a week. So this one wiper got fed up with it. So he says, “I'll fix him.” So he dumps about half a dozen cans of lye into the water. The first assistant, late in the day, asked him where his dungarees were. He says, “I left them in the bucket soaking”. The first assistant went over there and stirred in the bucket with a stick and all he found were the buttons.

This once actually happened. He washed the clothes up nice with about three cans of lye. Then he hung them over the rail, all pretty. But as soon as you went to touch them, they all came apart.